

DAILY NEWS

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Comment

More Managed News Hits Press

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By ALICE WIDENER

NEW YORK, Aug. 26—Since 1960 "managed news" has become a characteristic of Federal administrations in Washington. Cases have involved the Pentagon and State Department, but the bad practice never, until now, involved the FBI which deservedly enjoys the highest prestige and reputation for impartiality of any government agency.

The FBI makes known its investigative findings to authorized U. S. officials. It is their clear duty to refrain from discriminatory practice in imparting FBI information.

On Aug. 16 it became known that City Hall in New York City had asked the Justice Department to order the FBI to investigate charges of alleged communist infiltration into Mobilization for Youth, Inc., a pilot project for the Anti-Poverty Program.

On Aug. 20, City Hall announced at a press conference (attended by reporters from all newspapers and wire services) that the FBI report had been forwarded to the Justice Dept. in Washington and the findings would be revealed to the press by City Hall and the MFY Board of Directors "some time next week."

EXCLUSIVE

On Monday morning, Aug. 23, The New York Times carried the front page headline "2 in Youth Agency Are Communists, FBI Check Finds," and ran the exclusive story by Junius Griffin, "A Federal Bureau of Investigation loyalty check on per-

sonnel in Mobilization for Youth has shown that the agency has two employees who are current members of the Communist party and three who belong to other leftist organizations.

"In addition, the FBI report, which will be transmitted to City Hall Council President Paul R. Screvane today, reportedly will say that at least 32 of the agency's employees have been linked in the past to the Communist party or front groups."

New York reporters working on the MFY story were stunned to see the FBI findings exclusively in The Times and were indignant at the Justice Department for having leaked the news to only one source.

"Ten years ago the Liberals alleged that Joe McCarthy's worst offense was leaking FBI reports," said one reporter. "What have they to say about Justice Department officials' leaking an FBI report to The Times even before the New York City Council President had a chance to see it?"

The story now circulating among reporters about the leak is that on Aug. 21, Homer Bigart of The Times had breakfast with David Hackett, Assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy and chairman of President Johnson's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime.

Apparently, Mr. Hackett leaked the details of the FBI report to Mr. Bigart under a pledge that he would publish the story only after Hackett gave the word to release it.

Mr. Bigart informed The Times, left his story for future publication, and went to Atlantic City.

REPORTER

Meanwhile, Junius Griffin, a recently hired reporter for The Times, got much of the same information about the FBI report from the NAACP which had gotten it from a Justice Department leak in Washington.

No reporter criticizes The Times' reporters for getting the story or The Times for printing it. But most reporters think that if it is true that Mr. Hackett leaked the FBI report to a Times reporter, then Mr. Hackett should be fired from his government job. And they feel the same way about whoever in the Justice Department leaked the FBI report to the NAACP.

The matter is a serious public issue because the \$25 million Mobilization for Youth in New York City is only a token forerunner of the \$947 million Anti-Poverty Program in the field of youth welfare.

If the latter is to be infiltrated by Communists, and they'll certainly try, then the public's only defense against abuse is to be fully informed by a free press with equal rights to official public information gathered by the Justice Department.

The FBI is an arm of the Justice Department and the reputation for impartiality of the former is largely dependent on that of the latter. It would be a pity for the FBI to suffer unjustly for lack of discretion and trustworthiness in the Justice Department.